

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

BULLETIN

June 1977

N° 6

C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
I. 150th PLENARY SESSION	1 - 25
Welcoming speech by Mr Basil de FERRANTI	1
Speech by Mr John GRANT, President of the Council	2 - 4
Speech by Mr Roy JENKINS, President of the Commission	4 - 6
<u>Adoption of Opinions</u>	6 - 25
1. The current economic situation in the Community ...	6 - 8
2. Development of the social situation	9 - 10
3. East-West transport	10
4. Farm incomes	11 - 12
5. Coal stocks	12 - 14
6. Doorstep selling	14 - 17
7. Sulphur dioxide content of wines	17 - 18
8. Organization of the wine market	18 - 19
9. Compliance with provisions on wine	19 - 20
10. Hops	20
11. Seeds	20 - 21
12. Railways' annual accounts	21
13. Equality of treatment - men and women	22 - 24
14. Fight against poverty - amendment	24 - 25

	<u>Page</u>
II. <u>EXTERNAL RELATIONS</u>	26 - 27
1. Committee Chairman at the ILO and the Council of European Municipalities	26
2. The Economic and Social Committee meets the EFTA Consultative Committee	26
3. Meeting between the Joint Committee of the ACP/EEC Consultative Assembly and an Economic and Social Committee delegation	27
4. Section meeting in Bavaria	27
III. <u>NEW REQUESTS FOR OPINIONS</u>	28
IV. <u>RIGHT OF INITIATIVE</u>	29
V. <u>PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME OF FUTURE WORK</u>	30 - 31
VI. <u>MEMBERS' NEWS</u>	31



From left to right : the Committee's Chairman, Mr Basil de FERRANTI, the Council's President-in-Office, Mr John GRANT, and the Commission's President, Mr Roy JENKINS.

150th PLENARY SESSION

The Economic and Social Committee's 150th Plenary Session was held in Brussels on 22 and 23 June 1977. Mr Basil de FERRANTI, the Committee's Chairman, presided.

Discussion on two general Opinions was attended by the Council President-in-Office, Mr John GRANT, Under-Secretary of State for Employment, Mr Roy JENKINS, President of the Commission, and by Mr VREDELING, Vice-President of the Commission.

Welcoming speech by Mr Basil de FERRANTI

Mr Basil de FERRANTI, Chairman of the Economic and Social Committee, welcomed the President of the Council, and the President of the Commission on this, his first visit to the Committee.

"I should like in particular to thank you both for joining us at this early hour of 8.30 a.m. But we are all conscious that our colleagues in the organizations to which we belong will mostly have been at work already for half an hour or more. It is our colleagues at work - and out of work - who are important today.

In the Community, represented in this Committee, there are perhaps 40 million individual members of unions. There are around 100,000 companies, perhaps 4,000,000 small enterprises and many millions of farmers, consumers and professional people.

It is to realise their hopes and aspirations that we must strive at all levels of government - whether in the national governments or in the European Institutions, or at the local and regional level.

To that end, we are pleased that our debate will be followed by the Tripartite Conference on Monday, and we hope that our report and the Opinions we adopt today will be found to be a useful contribution to its deliberations."

Speech by Mr John GRANT, President of the Council

Addressing the Committee, the President of the Council, Mr John GRANT, stressed the interest of the debate on the economic and social situation as it takes place on the eve of the Tripartite Conference which is being held in Luxembourg on 27 June.

"This Conference, bringing together as it will representatives of the social partners, of national governments and of the Community institutions, will provide the occasion to analyze the current economic and social problems, to assess what progress has been made to date in tackling them, and to explore as many ideas as possible on the direction in which we should be seeking to move forward in order to break out of our current difficulties", he said.

"The problems of boosting production, reducing unemployment and overcoming inflation are the major concerns of the Governments of the Member States. The Committee's Opinion on the economic situation in the Community acknowledges that many measures have been taken in all Member States to curb unemployment and inflation, but it also notes that in no one country has the total effect of these measures been sufficient. The conclusion, therefore, is that the Community and the Member States must redouble their efforts in these areas. This conclusion is one **shared** by all those responsible for economic and social policies in our countries. Unfortunately, though it is not enough that Governments should resolve to do all in their power to overcome the present difficulties. If the Community's

objectives on unemployment and inflation are to be fulfilled, the cooperation of the social partners will be required. It also has to be recognized that the problems are extremely complex and deep-seated, particularly because of their structural aspects and their international ramifications.

"The European Council held in Rome on 25 and 26 March recognized that greater cooperation both at Community and international levels is necessary to create a lasting economic revival and to resolve the serious employment situation in the Member States without, at the same time, triggering off a new inflationary explosion. The European Council also agreed on a three-pronged approach at Community level. Firstly, attention will be directed towards measures easing certain problems in the labour market, in particular by providing better training and employment opportunities for young people and women. Secondly, ways will be sought of raising the level of investment in Member States. Finally, the aim is to prevent any further divergence of economic performance and indeed, to promote convergence. To this end, the European Council invited the Commission to seek ways of increasing the effectiveness of their activities. The Council agreed to review progress on this range of problems at its meeting in June. The outcome of the Tripartite Conference will make an important contribution to that review.

More recently, the Downing Street Summit reviewed the economic situation and made it the subject of one of their most important declarations. The Heads of State and of Government agreed that their most urgent task was to create more jobs while continuing to reduce inflation. They undertook to pursue growth and stability objectives which, whilst varying from country to country, should in their entirety create the basis for sustained world-wide,

non-inflationary growth. They agreed that their objectives could only be attained against a background of a major cooperative effort, covering many activities in the fields both of macro-economic policy and of more specific policies.

The Governments are aware of the seriousness of the crisis for each individual country and for the world as a whole and they intend to deal with it together in a coordinated way. Nevertheless, any economic strategy requires the fullest cooperation of the Social Partners if it is to succeed, as was clearly underlined at the European Council in Rome. This is why the debate in the Committee represents an important contribution to the Community's efforts to break free of the problems with which it has been wrestling during these past few years."

Speech by Mr Roy JENKINS, President of the Commission

Mr Roy JENKINS, President of the Commission, welcomed the opportunity to speak in the Committee's debate on economic and social questions in the Community, and to give a review on the work done by the new Commission in the first six months of its life. "Overall, my judgement, perhaps not surprisingly, is that we have been active and positive. The Commission has sought to take every opportunity to develop the role of the Community in determined but balanced fashion, looking for the link between immediate operational activities and the long-term objectives of the Community. I believe that we are progressing on both accounts; and it is the responsibility of the Commission to work out and demonstrate this link."

In agriculture and steel, the Commission had taken up its responsibilities in these two areas firmly and promptly, notably in seeking to make proposals relevant to the principal economic problems that confronted Europe today. "In the annual price fixing for agriculture we made proposals for very modest price increases, strictly in line with our efforts to master the problem of inflation in the Community. We also proposed further reductions in monetary compensatory amounts in order to permit a progressive return to the unity of the agricultural markets. Although the Council fixed prices rather higher than we proposed, they remained among the lowest in the history of the common agricultural policy. The settlement should be a beginning of a solution - I cannot put it higher than that - to solve some of the problems of the CAP - particularly since the Council also adopted, on our insistence - an action programme to curb the surpluses of milk."

In the steel sector the Commission has succeeded in getting accepted a wide-ranging set of measures which would ensure the survival of the European steel industry and assist its restructuring upon lines that can give a viable basis for the future. This included an increase in the supply of Community finance for restructuring programmes.

Mr JENKINS then referred to the renewal of the Social and Regional Funds, proposals to intensify the use of the Social Fund in hard-hit regions and sectors, to open it to the broader range of labour market policies beyond its traditional but narrow vocational training function. As regards the Regional Fund, our aim had been to strengthen the Community regional policy framework within which our Fund has to operate; to open up a new section of the Fund which would be unconstrained by the system of national quotas that has

in the past limited its flexibility; and to strengthen the links between the Regional Fund and the Community's other structural financial instruments.

In its budgetary proposals the new Commission had set out as priorities actions to contribute to easing the problem of unemployment through substantial increases in the reformed Regional and Social Funds, to get more effective Community energy policies underway and to increase Community aid effort to developing countries. Mr JENKINS referred to the need to develop more fully the Community's borrowing and lending powers as European economics above all needed a boost to investment in general and to investments of certain types in particular - the energy sector, in restructuring the steel industry and improving the infrastructure in the regions.

In conclusion he expressed his satisfaction that the Committee's debate would make an important contribution to the forthcoming Tripartite Conference.

Adoption of Opinions

1. The current economic situation in the Community

The Economic and Social Committee adopted by 67 votes in favour, 4 against and 22 abstentions, its Opinion on

The Economic Situation of the Community.

The main aim of the present Opinion is to establish to what extent the economic policy measures taken or planned at Community and Member State level since the Autumn of 1976, correspond to the recommendations made by the Committee in its Opinion on the Economic Situation, dated 28 October 1976.

The Committee expresses the view that the economic situation in the Community has basically not changed since the last Opinion was given, and that the prospects for economic development are more or less the same as then.

The Committee therefore reiterates the objectives set out in its previous Opinion - being largely those contained in the communiqué at the end of the second Tripartite Conference, held in Luxembourg in June 1976 - and looks at the economic policy measures actually taken both at Community level and at national level since October 1976.

The policy areas on which the Committee focuses attention include (at Community level) :

- coordination of national economic policies;
- coordination between Social and Regional Funds, the Investment Bank and agricultural policy;
- coordination of trade policy;
- the **stabilization** of exchange rates and reduction of balance-of-payments deficits;

- the problems of increasing public expenditure and the improving of information and statistics;

and (at national level) :

- the stimulation of the economy through public expenditure;
- the promotion of job-creating private investment;
- special action on employment;
- prices and incomes policy measures; and
- selective monetary and credit policies.

The Committee concludes that since October 1976 measures have been taken, either at Community level or at Member State level, which correspond directly or indirectly to the recommendations made by the Committee. The Section emphasizes, however, that given the consistently high levels of unemployment and inflation obtaining in the Community, the Community and the Member States must intensify and expand their efforts. The Committee repeats its view that the objectives cannot be achieved unless new economic measures are taken, and a disciplined attack is made on the root causes of unemployment.

The Committee based its Opinion on material prepared by its Section for Economic and Financial Questions, under the chairmanship of Mr MARGOT - Belgium - Various Interests. The Rapporteur was Mr PFEIFFER - Germany - Trade Unions.

2. Development of the social situation

The Economic and Social Committee adopted by 34 votes to 4, with 13 abstentions its Opinion on the

Development of the Social Situation in the Community.

In the first part of the Opinion the Committee looks at the institutional aspects of Community policy in the social sphere and discusses how the ESC can contribute to the achievement of a social consensus.

The Committee then tries to identify in the light of the Commission's Report what should be the key goals of that policy in 1977. At the top of its list it puts a more determined drive against unemployment.

It points out that to make a bigger impact on unemployment we need to have a policy actively seeking to bring about full employment, and proper machinery for implementing that policy. It also refers to the principles adopted by the Luxembourg Tripartite Conference on 24 June 1976 that re-establishment of full and better employment is linked to recovery of stability and growth.

The following subjects are discussed in connection with the proposed drive against unemployment :

- the ingredients of a more positive policy on employment;
- work-sharing;

- shorter working hours;
- the problem of undeclared work.

Among the other main social goals for 1977 the Section discusses progress towards the removal of inequalities and improvement of living and working conditions.

The Opinion was based on material produced by the Committee's Section for Social Questions under the chairmanship of Mr HOUTHUYS - Belgium - Workers' Group. The Rapporteur was Mr ROLLINGER - Luxembourg - Various Interests Group.

3. East-West transport

The Economic and Social Committee unanimously adopted its Opinion on

Transport Problems in Relations with Eastern Bloc Countries.

In its Opinion the Committee appeals to the official EEC quarters and the national governments on the eve of the follow-up conference to Helsinki in Belgrade to make efforts at the conference to secure greater cooperation from the Eastern Bloc countries over transport and to prevent serious damage, disturbance or disturbance or disruption to the market.

The Committee's Opinion was based on material produced by its Section for Transport and Communications under the chairmanship of Mr HOFFMANN - Germany - Workers' Group. The Rapporteur was Mr HENNIG - Germany - Various Interests Group.

4. Farm incomes

Agricultural Incomes in the Community

Gist of the Commission's Document

The Commission's report makes use of the new data available to complete and update the chapter on agricultural incomes in the 1976 Report on the Agricultural Situation in the Community. It deals in turn with the recent past (1975/76) and the present (1976/77), covering the two following aspects :

- The development of agricultural incomes in "1975" (1975/76 marketing year) for the main types of farming, according to the Farm Accountancy Data Network of the EEC (FADN);
- The estimate of agricultural incomes in the Member States in 1976 (1976/77) according to the results obtained by the expert group on the "Sectoral Income Index", and information collected by the Community Committee on the Farm Accountancy Data Network.

Gist of the Opinion

The Economic and Social Committee adopted unanimously this supplementary Opinion.

The Committee welcomes the fact that information is now more up to date and of higher quality.

It regrets, however, that the document does not include particulars which would enable a comparison to be made between farm and non-farm incomes in the various regions.

After having discussed the difficulties of evaluating agricultural incomes in the EEC at macro-economic and micro-economic level, the Committee draws some conclusions as to ways of improving the measurements of these incomes.

The first priority is to standardize methods, concepts and the provision of statistics on farm incomes.

Encouragement should thus be given to the Commission's efforts to expand the FADN (Farm Accountancy Data Network).

Finally, the Committee recognizes that the reasons for the various divergences are not purely agricultural. General economic conditions are more important in this respect.

The Economic and Social Committee based its Opinion on material prepared by its Section for Agriculture under the chairmanship of Mr EMO CAPODILISTA - Italy - Various Interests. The Rapporteur was Mr de CAFFARELLI - France - Various Interests.

5. Coal Stocks

Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) concerning
Community Aid for Financing Cyclical Stocks of Hard
Coal, Coke and Patent Fuel

Gist of the Proposal

The Commission proposes a system of financial aid to alleviate the burden of holding high levels of pithead stocks of coal. The scheme would cost the Community

a total of 150 million u.a. over a three year period from 1 January 1978 (i.e. 50 million u.a. each year).

Aid would only be given to stocks held over and above normal "working" stocks. It would be granted for a maximum total of 20 million tonnes. As currently envisaged by the Commission, the scheme would operate for total Community stocks between the 20 million tonnes and 40 million tonnes.

The financial aid, which is designed to cover approximately 33% of costs, would be granted at a flat rate of 2.5 u.a. per tonne per year.

It will apply to stocks of hard coal, hard coke and patent fuel. The stocks may be held by the producers of hard coal, independent coking plants, independent fuel producers, and by the Governments of the Member States.

Gist of the Opinion

The Economic and Social Committee adopted by 58 votes for, 6 votes against and 7 abstentions, its Opinion on this proposal.

The Committee approves the principle of Community aid for coal. In this light it endorses the system of financial aid for cyclical coal stocks as proposed by the Commission.

The scheme is designed to alleviate the burden of holding high levels of pithead stocks of coal. It would cost the Community

a total of 150 million u.a. over a three-year period from 1 January 1978 (i.e. 50 million u.a. each year).

Aid would only be given to stocks held over and above normal "working" stocks. It would be granted for a maximum total of 20 million tonnes. As currently envisaged by the Commission, the scheme would operate for total Community stocks between 20 million tonnes and 40 million tonnes.

The financial aid, which is designed to cover approximately 33% of costs, would be granted at a flat rate of 2.5 u.a. per tonne per year.

At the same time, the Committee believes that the scheme should be closely monitored, and where necessary corrected, so as to ensure that the stocks do not become structural.

The Committee based its Opinion on material prepared by its Section for Energy and Nuclear Questions under the chairmanship of Mr MILLER - United Kingdom - Employers. The Rapporteur was Mr Sj. JONKER - Netherlands - Employers.

6. Doorstep selling

Proposal for a Council Directive to Protect Consumers in the Case of Contracts Negotiated away from Business Premises (Doorstep Selling)

Gist of the Proposal

The Commission has tried to ensure that the element of surprise inherent in this type of sale is not harmful to the consumer by giving him the right to reconsider the obligation arising from the sale in question. This proposal is part of the Community's preliminary programme for a consumer protection and information policy which was adopted in April 1975.

The turnover in this type of selling in the Community is put at between 1,000 and 2,000 million u.a. The items sold come under the following main headings : household appliances, cars, cosmetics, household products, furniture, books and records.

The proposed directive provides that contracts negotiated away from business premises must be in writing.

The written contract must contain certain items of information which are particularly important from the after-sales viewpoint (service, complaints, etc.). The consumer also has the right to revoke the contract within a period of at least seven days after signing it. Since the Directive is intended to provide a minimum degree of protection for consumers, certain articles enable the Member States to adopt additional provisions if they wish to provide greater protection for consumers.

Gist of the Opinion

The Economic and Social Committee adopted unanimously, by 56 votes in favour, 16 against and 15 abstentions, its Opinion on this proposal.

The Committee approves the proposed Directive and welcomes the extremely positive action of providing consumers with legitimate protection in the case of doorstep contracts.

The Committee would, however, like to have seen a licence system introduced for door-to-door salesmen so as to prevent flagrant abuse, e.g. when a salesman uses surveys as a pretext for attempting to sell a given product.

The Committee is also against the idea of excluding from the scope of the Directive sales concluded by an intermediary on the basis of a mail-order catalogue.

The Committee hopes that mail-order selling carried out solely in writing will be dealt with as soon as possible in a special Directive.

With regard to the provision whereby contracts worth less than 25 European units of account are excluded from the scope of the Directive, the Committee considers that this level should be lowered to 15 European units. The Committee also considers that the house-to-house delivery of foodstuffs should be excluded from the scope of the Directive.

Finally, the Committee considers that people should be able to enjoy the same cooling-off period in respect of insurance contracts negotiated away from business premises as is proposed for other contracts. In the case of insurance contracts, however, the policy would continue to be valid up to the first annual due date, and the premium would have to be paid for that year.

The Committee based its Opinion on material prepared by its Section for Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs under the chairmanship of Mr ROSEINGRAVE - Various Interests - Ireland. The Rapporteur was Miss ROBERTS - Various Interests - United Kingdom.

7. Sulphur dioxide content of wines

Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) amending Regulation (EEC) Nos. 816/70, 2893/74 and 817/70 as regards the Maximum Total Sulphur Dioxide Content of Wines other than Liqueur Wines.

Gist of the Commission's proposal

The Commission is proposing that the maximum sulphur dioxide content of wines on their release to the market for direct human consumption should not exceed 175 milligrammes per litre for red wines or 225 milligrammes per litre for white and rosé wines.

The following limits are to be permitted as exceptions to the general rules :

- 225 milligrammes per litre for red wines and 275 milligrammes per litre for white and rosé wines whose residual sugar content expressed as invert sugar is not less than 5 grammes per litre;
- 300 milligrammes per litre for white wines qualifying for the description "Auslese";
- 400 milligrammes per litre for certain other white wines, notably quality wines produced in specified regions and entitled to a registered designation of origin.

The Commission points out that the waivers permitted in the two last points may be changed by the Council acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission.

Gist of the Opinion

The Economic and Social Committee adopted unanimously its Opinion on this proposal.

The Economic and Social Committee approves the Commission's proposal to reduce the maximum sulphur dioxide content of certain wines.

The Committee would also like to see the Commission gradually align the present proposed derogations on the maximum levels allowed for other wines.

The Committee requests that the Commission's proposed derogations for certain Romanian and Austrian wines be dropped.

The Committee considers that bringing imported products under the present regulation may for one thing create distortions between these wines and other non-EEC wines, and for another lead to a further imbalance adversely affecting Community wines.

The Committee considers that consideration should be given to making the consumer better informed about the various substances in wine, especially sulphur dioxide and sorbic acid.

The Committee based its Opinion on material prepared by its Section for Agriculture under the chairmanship of Mr ENO CAPODILISTA - Italy - Various Interests. The Rapporteur was Mr RAINERO - Italy - Various Interests.

8. Organization of the wine market

Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) Amending Regulation (EEC) No. 816/70 laying down Additional Provisions for the Common Organization of the Market in Wine

(Rapporteur-General : Mr DE GRAVE - Belgium - Workers)

The Committee endorses the Commission's proposal, subject to certain comments.

The Opinion was adopted unanimously.

9. Compliance with provisions on wine

Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) on Direct Cooperation between the Bodies Designated by Member States to Verify Compliance with Community and National Provisions in the Wine Sector

Gist of the Commission's Proposal

The Commission has decided to stress direct cooperation between the specialized bodies in the various Member States. Article 39 a) of Regulation (EEC) No. 816/70 was therefore modified along these lines by Regulation (EEC) No. 1160/70. On the basis of that Article, this proposal contains rules governing direct cooperation and providing for intensification and acceleration of the exchange of information between the specialized bodies in the various Member States. The subject of such exchanges is defined and implementing rules can be adopted as necessary.

Gist of the Opinion

The Economic and Social Committee adopted unanimously its Opinion on this proposal.

The Committee notes with satisfaction that the present proposal to some extent follows up the requests it has made on various occasions for an efficient, Community-level monitoring system to be set up for the wine sector.

However, the Committee regrets that the Commission has presented a proposal that is relatively moderate, especially as regards the scope and nature of the controls it suggests.

Finally, the Committee feels that the Commission must be involved more in implementing the proposed measures.

The Committee based its Opinion on material prepared by its Section for Agriculture under the chairmanship of Mr EMO CAPODILISTA - Italy - Various Interests. The Rapporteur was Mr GUILLAUME - France - Various Interests.

10. Hops

Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) laying down, in respect of Hops, the amount of the Aid to Producers for the 1976 Harvest

(Rapporteur : Mr BERNAERT - Belgium - Employers)

The Committee endorses the proposed regulation, subject to certain comments.

This Opinion was adopted unanimously.

11. SEEDS

Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directives 66/400/EEC, 66/401/EEC, 66/402/EEC, 66/403/EEC, 68/193/EEC, 69/208/EEC, 70/458/EEC and 70/457/EEC on the Marketing of Beet Seed, Fodder Plant Seed, Cereal Seed, Seed Potatoes, Material for the Vegetative Propagation of the Vine, Seed of Oil and Fibre Plants, Vegetable Seed and on the Common Catalogue of Varieties of Agricultural Plant Species

(Rapporteur-General : Mr LAPIE - France - Various Interests)

The Committee endorses the proposed directive, subject to certain comments.

This Opinion was adopted unanimously.

12. Railways' annual accounts

Proposal for a Council Regulation on the Necessary Measures to Achieve Comparability between the Accounting Systems and Annual Accounts of Railway Undertakings

Gist of the Commission document

The purpose of the draft Regulation is to make the accounts of national railway undertakings (by which is meant the balance sheet, the profit and loss account and commentaries thereon) comparable.

Gist of the Opinion

The Economic and Social Committee unanimously adopted its Opinion on this proposal.

The Committee approves the measure since it will help to coordinate national policies on the railways and is an important step towards a possible future integration of EEC railways.

The Committee's Opinion was based on material produced by its Section for Transport and Communications under the chairmanship of Mr HOFFMANN - Employers' Group - Germany. The Rapporteur was Mr FREDERSDORF - Various Interests Group - Germany.

13. Equality of Treatment - Men and Women

Proposal for a Directive concerning the Progressive Implementation of the Principle of Equality of Treatment for Men and Women in Matters of Social Security.

Gist of the draft Directive

The draft Directive is part of the Social Action Programme, and a necessary complement to the Directive adopted by the Council on 9 February 1976 on Implementation of the Principle of Equality amongst Men and Women as regards Access to Employment, Vocational Training, Promotion and Working Conditions.

The draft directive aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex in the conditions of entitlement for, and the duration and the total amount of, benefits received in the contingencies of unemployment, old age, sickness (including medical care), invalidity and industrial injuries and disease.

It will apply to both statutory social security schemes and occupational schemes operating under agreements between particular groups of workers and their employers.

The Directive leaves out some areas of social security from the equality moves, but the Member States are called upon to keep these excluded areas under review in the light of changing social attitudes.

The equal treatment required under the Directive is to be implemented in three stages. Member States have to report to the Commission at the end of each stage on all aspects of the situation with regard to equality of treatment in social security.

Gist of the Opinion

The Economic and Social Committee unanimously adopted its Opinion on this proposal.

The Committee considers this Directive to be an important first step towards equality between the sexes in the social security field. The obligation that Article 5 of the Directive imposes on Member States of bringing their social security laws and regulations into line with the equality principle and of making employers and employees do the same within their particular province is significant, because, in both statutory and occupational schemes and the private insurance arrangements which often supplement them, many kinds of discrimination still occur.

The Committee agrees with the Commission that the differences in the social security treatment of men and women cannot be ended with a single measure. It urges, however, that Council Directives also be issued as soon as possible on the areas that have either been excluded from the present Directive or are not referred to it.

The Committee points out that in the present general employment situation, introduction of a uniform retirement age for men and women is well worth considering, and urges the Commission not to lose sight of this possibility, on account of the widely divergent national attitudes to the question of lowering the retirement age.

The Committee again recommends the Commission to have a study carried out into ways of bringing in independent social security rights for both spouses. This is a particularly important matter for both sexes since the present arrangements in many Member States regarding derived pension rights are outdated.

The Committee considers that the proposal that the Member States and labour and employers' organizations should undertake regular reviews of the areas excluded from the Directive will not be sufficient to stimulate rapid change in these important areas of social security.

The Committee's Opinion was based on material produced by its Section for Social Questions under the chairmanship of Mr HOUTHUYS - Belgium - Workers' Group. The Rapporteur was Mrs WEBER - Germany - Workers' Group.

14. Fight Against Poverty - Amendment

The Economic and Social Committee adopted unanimously its Opinion on the

Proposal for a Council decision modifying the decision of 22 July 1975 concerning a programme of pilot schemes and pilot studies to combat poverty.

The Committee has in the past attached importance and urgency to the problems of poverty within the Member States. It has expressed full support for the first Programme of pilot schemes and studies to combat poverty, drawn up in accordance with the resolution of the Council of 21 January 1974, concerning the Social Action Programme in its Opinion of 24 April 1975 and has also pointed out in its Opinion on the Development of the social situation in the Community in 1976 that the Commission should speed up the completion of its Programme of pilot studies to combat poverty, on the basis of the interim report published on 13 January 1977.

The Committee therefore supports the continuation of this programme and approves the present proposal of the European Commission.

(The Rapporteur-General was Mr CARROLL - Ireland - Workers).

II. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

1. Chairman of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities visited the ILO and the Council of European Municipalities

On 7 June 1977, Mr Basil de FERRANTI attended the annual conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva. His programme included a meeting with Mr Francis BLANCHARD, Director-General of the ILO.

On 8 June, Mr de FERRANTI attended the XIIth Congress of the Council of European Municipalities in Lausanne. As far as European political matters were concerned, the theme of the congress was the run-up to direct elections to the European Parliament and the role of local and regional authorities.

Mr de FERRANTI was accompanied by Secretary-General Delfo DELFINI and Director-General Roger LOUET.

2. Economic and Social Committee meeting with the EFTA Consultative Committee

On 8 June 1977, representatives of the Committee's Section for External Relations, led by the Section Chairman, Mr CARSTENS, met in Geneva.

The discussions focussed, as planned, on the three subjects on the agenda, namely, the economic and social situation, trade problems and non-tariff problems.

Following on from a meeting between the Secretary-General, Mr DELFINI, and the Secretary-General of EFTA, Mr MULLER, it is hoped that in the future there will be a better flow of information between the two bodies.



The Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services on a visit to a vocational training centre in Deggendorf, Bavaria.

3. Meeting between the Joint Committee of the ACP/EEC Consultative Assembly and an Economic and Social Committee delegation

On 9 June a meeting was held in Luxembourg between an eighteen-strong delegation from the Economic and Social Committee and representatives of socio-economic groups in the ACP States. The idea for the meeting came from the Joint Committee of the ACP/EEC Consultative Assembly.

The meeting represents a first step towards implementing the Lomé Convention's provisions for talks between economic interest groups in the ACP States and the Community.

The meeting enabled all the participants to discuss the problems posed by the implementation of the Convention and revealed the need to foster contacts between representatives of economic and social groups in the ACP States and the Community.

4. Section meeting in Bavaria

The Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services met in Bischofsmais/Bavaria on 14-15 June to prepare its Opinion on small and medium-sized enterprises in the Community context. The Section's Chairman, Mr HEMMER, presided and the Rapporteur for the Opinion was Mr KOLBENSCHLAG (Germany) from the Various Interests Group.

The Section also visited vocational training centres in Deggendorf and Straubing, financed by the Chamber of Crafts of Lower Bavaria and the Upper Palatinate. The Section's members were received by the Chamber's President, Mr Bernard SUTTNER, and its Managing Director, Mr Anton HINTERDOBLER.

III. NEW REQUESTS FOR OPINIONS

In a letter dated 8 June 1977, the Council asked the Committee for an Opinion on the :

1. Draft Directive on Consumer Protection in the Marking and Display of the Prices of Foodstuffs
2. Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) on the Granting of Financial Aids to Demonstration Projects in the Field of Energy-Saving, and
3. Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) on the Granting of Financial Support for Projects to Exploit Alternative Energy Sources
4. Proposal for a Council Directive on Energy Savings from the Modernization of Existing Buildings in the Community
5. Proposal for a Council Directive on the Performance, Maintenance and Regulation of Heat Generators and the Insulation of the Heat Distribution System in New Buildings
6. Commission's Communication to the Council setting out Guidelines for the Regional Policy
7. Proposal for a Council Regulation Laying Down Conditions for the Post-Clearance Collection of Import Duties or Export Duties which have been Underpaid on Goods Entered for A Customs Procedure Involving the Obligation to Pay Such Duties
8. Commission's amended proposal for a Council Regulation on Producer Groups and Union Groups

IV. RIGHT OF INITIATIVE

The Committee decided at its 150th Plenary Session (22 and 23 June 1977) to prepare own-initiative Opinions on the following topics :

1. The impact of Part-Time Work on the Labour Market at the Moment
2. The Intake of Medicine and its Effects on Public Health.

*

V. PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME OF FUTURE WORK

September 1977 Plenary Session

Opinions provided on request

- Data Processing
- Regional Policy Guidelines
- Protection of Workers Exposed to VCM
- Pleasure Boats

Opinions produced on own initiative

- Small- and Medium-sized Firms
- Industrial Change

Study

- Agreements between EEC and Countries in Southern and Eastern Mediterranean

Subsequent Plenary Sessions

Opinions provided on request

- Green Paper on Worker Participation
- Defective Products
- Alcohol
- Commercial Agents
- Double Taxation

Opinions produced on own initiative

- Education and Vocational Training for Young People
- Mediterranean Agriculture
- Regional Fund Report for 1976

Studies

- Tax Harmonization
- Relations between EEC and Greece

*

VI. MEMBERS' NEWS

Decorations

Miss Eirlys ROBERTS and Mr Terence PARRY have been made Commanders of the Order of the British Empire (CBE).

Appointments

Mr Yvan CHARPENTIE has been re-elected President of the General Confederation of Executive Staffs (CGC).

Mr Manlio GERMOZZI has been elected President of the International Union of Craft Industries of the European Economic Community (UACEE).

At the congress of the International Union of Crafts and Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (UIAPME), Mr Léon GINGEMBRE was made honorary president.

**PUBLICATIONS OBTAINABLE FROM THE ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

Periodical

- Bulletin (monthly publication)

General Documentation

- The Economic and Social Committee (leaflet) (January 1975)
- The Economic and Social Committee (April 1975)
(A descriptive brochure) 16 p.
- Annual Report (1976) 80 p. (1975) 62 p. (1974) 60 p. (1973) 64 p.
- Directory (January 1977)
(List of members) 42 p.

Opinions and Studies

- Research and Development (November 1976)
(Study) 35 p.
- Systems of education and vocational training
(August 1976) (Study) 114 p.
- Regional Policy (March 1976)
(Opinion) 11 p.
- European Union (July 1975)
(Opinion) 33 p.
- Progress Report on the Common Agricultural Policy
(February 1975) (Study) 52 p.
- The Situation of Small and Medium-sized Undertakings in the
European Community (March 1975) (Study) 69 p.